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ABSTRACT

A telephone survey of 337 parents was conducted to determine (1) the television viewing rules parents have for regulating their children's use of television, (2) the media use and social indicators that account for variance in family television viewing rules, and (3) the relationship between family communication patterns and family television rules. Among the findings were that parents were not only concerned with restricting or permitting the consumption of certain types of television program content by their children, but were also concerned with how their children interpreted television content; that the use of television was not exclusively content related, but also functioned as a form of regulation of behavior; that parents tended to be less restrictive for older children than for younger children; that the educational level of the parent was only a significant predictor of social control rules; that the greater the number of viewing rules a parent had, the more restrictive that parent was in regulating a child's viewing behavior; and that the more rules a parent had for television viewing, the more likely that parent was to have content discussion rules. (HOD)

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CONTROLLING CHILDREN'S TELEVISION VIEWING: PREDICTORS OF FAMILY TELEVISION RULES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

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In recent years a significant amount of attention has been given to children's use of television and the effects that use has in such diverse areas as aggression and violence, political socialization and the learning of consumer behaviors. One of the correlates to that use and the attendant effects has been the role of parental influence. Chaffee, McLeod and Atkin (1971) argued that "by the time (a child) reaches adolescence, it is plausible to assume that . . . patterns of media use have been shaped by social influences in the home, particularly the parents" (323). They further suggested that parental social influence can be divided into two general categories: direct and indirect influences. Under direct influence they placed parental example, or the modeling hypothesis (Schramm, et al., 1961; and others) while at the same time noting that recent research has cast doubts as to its validity (Chaffee, McLeod and Atkin, 1970; Clarke, 1969; Comstock, et al., 1978). They considered patterns of parent-child communication, defined in construct form as family communication patterns (McLeod, et al., 1966; McLeod, et al., 1967) as indirect influences on children's television habits.

While Chaffee, et al., (1971) did not include family viewing rules as a direct social influence, it seems reasonable to posit that parental attempts to regulate the viewing environment may be influential in molding the child's use of television. Such viewing rules help constitute the viewing experience and are part of the total social milieu within which children consume television. The goals of this paper, then, are two-fold. First, we will explore the nature and frequency of parental television viewing rules. Second, we will analyze the relationship between these manifestations of direct parental influences as represented by family communication patterns.[1]

Though there is not an extensive body of research that has studied parental television rules, there are research reports that address this issue. Steiner (1963) and Bower (1973), in a replication of Steiner's study ten years later, reported that only a little more than 40 percent of the subjects in each sample had definite rules for television viewing, while approximately 30 percent in each sample had no viewing rules. They further reported that the likelihood of subjects stating that they had definite viewing rules increased linearly as education increased.

Bower (1973) reported that the age of a child seemed to affect the frequency with which viewing rules were applied--specifically for viewing time rules and program content rules. While presenting no statistical analysis which would indicate whether the differences by age were significant, he found a curvelinear pattern for both time and content rules. Parents of children between 4 and 6 years of age reported having both time and content rules least frequently. Parents of children between 7 and 9 years of age reported having both types of rules most frequently. Finally, parents of children between 10 and 12 years of age reported having such rules only slightly more frequently than parents of 4 to 6 year olds. Comstock et al., (1978, suggested that the rise in content rules in older children represented parental concern for the socialization effect of television which would seem to have some face validity. On the other hand, neither Bower (1973) nor Comstock, et al., (1978) addressed the curvelinear nature of the relationship.

Hess and Goldman (1962), using a non-random sample of 99 mothers with children between 5 and 10 years old, reported that content was a significantly greater issue than the amount of time the child spends with television.

Interestingly, though, the mothers reported that while they tended to monitor the program content their children watched (89% reported that they supervised the content always or often), they seldom or never suggested programs (79%) and reported specific program restrictions rarely. Hess and Goldman explained this apparent anomoly by noting that most mothers felt content effects were at best temporary and, thus, not of significant concern. Finally, they reported that mothers were the dominant factor in the control of television viewing; in the majority of cases fathers seemed to exert little control over the child's television behavior.

Lyle and Hoffman (1972) offered further evidence to suggest that rules for television viewing are somewhat infrequent. Using children's perceptions of parental imposed limits on television use, they found that 19 percent of first graders, 22 percent of sixth graders and 9 percent of tenth graders perceived parental limitations. While these percentages are significantly lower than those presented by Steiner (1963) and Bower (1973), some of this difference can be explained by the fact that some parental rules may be quite clear to the parent by still sufficiently subtle that the child might not perceive them as rules. This particular set of results also gave some support for the supposition that the imposition of viewing rules decreases as children grow older. Lyle and Hoffman (1972) reported that 14 percent of sixth graders and 27 percent of tenth graders stated that their parents imposed no rules at the time of the interview but did when the children were younger.

Sex differences also seem to be a factor in the imposition of television viewing rules. Lyle and Hoffman (1972) found that, in the case of

mothers of first graders, girls had more controls placed on them than did boys. Sixty five percent of the boys never had any hours set for television viewing and 73 percent had no restrictions on the amount of television viewed. On the other hand, only 50 percent of the girls had no set hours and 63 percent had no restrictions on the amount of television viewed. Mothers of first grade girls were more likely to select programs for their child than were mothers of first grade boys. Finally, girls were more likely to be punished through the use of television restrictions than were boys, though there was no apparent difference between boys and girls relative to the use of television as a reward.

In summary, then, Comstock, et al. (1978) suggested that parents "express a good deal of concern over the impact of television on their children, but are much less likely to control the child's viewing directly ..." (189). Research indicates that time rules are of relatively little concern for parents (Hess and Goldman, 1962; Comstock, et al. 1978) and when time rules are imposed they tend to be related most generally to bedtime (Greenberg and Dervin, 1970). Content rules seem to be of more concern to parents, though these are still relatively infrequent (Steiner, 1963; Bower, 1973; Hess and Goldman, 1962).

While these research reports seem to be relatively straight forward and generally consistent across studies, there are several aspects of television viewing rules that as yet have not been fully explored. First, the categorization of rule types is somewhat restrictive; this restrictive conceptualization of rules may, in part, influence the relative infrequency of rules in the reported literature. In most cases (see Maccoby, 1959; Hess and Goldman, 1962; Steiner, 1963; Bower, 1973; and Lyle and Hoffman, 1972) viewing rules are of

two types: content and time. Lyle and Hoffman, though, added the use of television for reward and punishment as a further discrimination.

If one looks at this addition, a more complex pattern of television regulation is suggested. Clearly, reward and punishment is neither a time nor a content rule, but instead, suggest that parental regulative behaviors extend beyond the mere regulation of how much, when and what programs or program types may be consumed. Television is an intregal part of the social environment of the home. The use of television as a reward or punishemnt for non-television related behaviors strongly suggests an interelationship between television use and other home-related activities and regulations. We might refer to this additional category as context of viewing rules. Robertson and Russiter (1976) suggested that parental co-viewing with their children as well as modes of parent/child interactions during that co-viewing are important regulative activities. Brown and Linne (1976) also expressed concern for the regulative aspects of viewing context, as did Reid (1979).

The second area related to television viewing rules that has not been fully explored is the relationship between other factors that impact upon the functioning of the family unit and the relative influence these factors have on the nature of television viewing rules. There is evidence to suggest that the education of the parent is a factor (Bower, 1973), as well as the age of children (Lyle and Hoffman, 1972; and Bower, 1973), and the sex of the children (Lyle and Hoffman, 1973). Two factors that have not been explored in the literature are the number of children in the home and the family communication patterns in the home environment. The number of children living in the home would seem to be a potentially important variable in understanding parental regulation of television simply because the process of social control

should become more complex as the number of children under the control of the parent increases. If this is indeed the case, the frequency and type of television rules should be affected.

Family communication patterns (FCP) also would seem to be potentially related to television viewing rules. The family communication pattern construct is an attempt to tap the communication environment that functions normatively within the family. This communication environment may be influential in explaining the application of viewing rules since it is an intregal part of the family milieu from which rules are generated. Family communication patterns are composed and vary along two relatively distinct dimensions: a socio dimension and a concept dimension (Chaffee and McLeod, 1972; and Chaffee, McLeod and Atkin, 1971). The socio dimension includes such factors as the relative level of emphasis placed on the maintenance of harmonious personal relations, the avoidance of controversy and the repression of feelings on "extra personal" topics while the concept of dimension considers such factors as the emphasis placed on the expression of ideas and the exposure to controversy and controversial topics (Chaffee, McLeod, and Atkin, 1971, 331-332). From these two dimensions a family communication pattern typology has been developed. The following categories make up this typology: Laissez-faire families who emphasize neither socio-orientations nor concept-orientations; protective families who stress socio-orientations but deemphasize concept orientations; pluralistic families who stress concept orientations at the expense of socio-orientations; and consensual families who stress both types of orientation.

This measure has been shown to relate to a host of media use patterns among adolescent viewers. A series of studies has reported that high media use for public affairs content was associated with children from families who stress a concept orientation, while high consumption of entertainment

programming was associated with children from families who stress a socio-orientation (Chaffee, McLeod and Wackman, 1966; McLeod, Chaffee and Wackman, 1967; Chaffee, McLeod and Atkin, 1971; Chaffee and McLeod, 1972). Chaffee and McLeod (1972) found that socio-oriented homes tended to view more violent programs than concept-oriented homes, particularly in protective homes. Further, they reported that pluralistic children watched the least amount of television and showed the least reduction in television viewing as the age of the child increased, while protective children watched the greatest amount of television and showed the greatest change in viewing time as age increased.

The causal chain that links family communication patterns with those reported differences is by no means clear. One possible factor, but certainly not the only one, is the presence or absence of family viewing rules, as well as the types of rules used by the parents. This study will attempt to explore the potential relationship between family communication patterns and family viewing rules.

The three basic research questions addressed in this study are:

1. What are the television viewing rules parents have for regulating their children's use of television?
2. What are the media use and social indicators which account for variance in family television viewing rules?
3. What is the relationship between family communication patterns and family television viewing rules?

Methods

To address the research questions posed above, a survey was completed in a large mid-western city during the fall of 1979. A total of 337 telephone

interviews were completed with male and female household heads selected probabilistically from the telephone directory. All respondents were required to have at least one child between the ages of 2 and 15. The interview completion rate for eligible respondents was 76.4%. The questionnaire was administered by trained interviewers drawn from a course in broadcast audience.

The questionnaire consisted of measures contructed to tap parental rules for television viewing, a set of standard family communication pattern items, and media use and demographic items for both the respondent and eligible children in the household. For respondents with two or more children data were gathered on the oldest and youngest children within the defined age range; the same questions were asked about each child. In such cases procedures were developed to randomly determine whether the respondent would be questioned about the oldest or youngest child first.

Rule measures were of two types: Likert type items and open ended questions. A series of 21 Likert type items were constructed to tap three major types of viewing rules: time, content, and context. One of the time rule items stated "We have a very strict policy about how much TV (name of child) watches." Responses were strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Using the same set of responses, a content rule item stated "(name of child) is not permitted to watch violent television shows." Again, using the same responses, an example of a context rule item was "When my friends are over, I encourage (name of child) to watch television." Respondents were also asked "What rules do you have for him/her (child in question) regarding television viewing?" A maximum of five rules were

recorded.[2] Family communication pattern items were very similar to those reported by Chaffee, McLeod and Atkin (1971) with only slight rewording.[3]

The anlaysis of the data was completed in three stages. First, factor analysis was used to identify independent television rule clusters. Based on the factors obtained, separate multiple regression analyses were performed in order to display the multivariate influences on these family television rules in stage two. Fianlly a series of univariate comparisons were performed on the items which best explained the variance of the identified family television rules. Because the latter stages were dependent on results of the previous stages, the specified methodological procedures employed will be treated in the Results section as they emerge.

Results

Factor Analysis

The 21 Likert items designed to tap family television rules were submitted to factor analysis utilizing varimax rotation procedures. The criteria for interpreting the appropriate solution included: maximization of variance; at least two items with acceptable factor loadings on each factor; and Catell's Scree test.

Table 1 presents the results of the three factor solution which was interpreted; it accounted for 35.2 percent of the total variance.

Insert Table 1 about here

Factor 1 was labeled the Restrictiveness of television rules. The items with acceptable factor loadings all pointed to few restrictions placed on the child in terms of amount or type of television viewing. The highest loaded item

was a negative loading for "We have a very strict policy about how much TV (name of child) watches."

The highest loaded item on Factor II was a strong positive loading for "We make it a rule to explain to (name of child) what TV commercials mean." All the items showed a similar emphasis on explaining the content of television to the child. We labeled Factor II Content Discussion.

Factor III had three items with acceptable factor loadings and was labeled Social Control. The item with the strongest loading was "When I want to reward (name of child) for doing something good, I often let him/her watch extra television." All the items with high loadings on this factor indicated a use of television which was removed from the specific content of programs. Instead the items indicated that these regulators of television were for particular means of social control of the child. Television was a "handy" way to manage the child in a praticular way in particular circumstances.

Reliability

The raw scores of items with acceptable factor loadings for each factor were summed to create indices which reflected a parent's overall preceived importance of each factor in regulating television in their family. The five highest loaded items on Factor I, Restrictiveness of rules index, had a coefficient of .71 (standardized item alpha). The three items which comprised the Content Discussion index, Factor II, had a reliability of .62 (standardized item alpha). The reliability for the three items with the highest factor loadings on Factor III, the Social Control index, was only .50. An examination of the correlation matrix of the three items which comprised this measure showed that item 16 was the source of the low reliability. We therefore dropped item 16 from further analysis and used a two item measure for Social

Control. The reliability of this two item indicator was still quite low, .56 (standardized item alpha).

Multiple Regression

Our second major research question was to try to describe what might account for the rules of television use which operated in the home. The three television rule clusters identified by the factor analysis were subsequently used as the criterion variables for three separate stepwise multiple regression analyses (one each for Restrictiveness, Content Discussion, and Social Control rules). Predictor variables were selected based on their performance in past research dealing with either television rules or family communication patterns. In addition, several demographic indicators and media use variables were included. The purpose of these regression analyses was to attempt to reduce the number of variables which were significantly contributing to the rules measures so that univariate comparisons could be made between groups in stage three. The following variables were used for these analyses; the means and standard deviations of each indicator are also presented.

	Mean	SD
1. Age of Child	9.26	3.36
2. Sex of Child	1.48	.51
3. Number of children in family	2.06	.89
4. Number of TV rules *	1.61	1.28
5. Education of parent (six levels)	3.63	.95
6. Concept orientation **	17.74	3.36
7. Social orientation ***	14.59	3.72
8. Typical weeday TV viewing (hours)	2.28	1.30

		Mean	SD
9.	Typical Saturday TV viewing (hours)	3.70	1.85
10.	Total Household TV viewing (hours)	7.28	4.63
11.	Parent's Age (six levels)	2.83	.98
12.	Marital Status (1=married; 2=separated)	1.13	.33

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* Subjects were asked the question, "Families have rules about how much or when their children may watch TV; what kinds of programs they encourage or discourage; and things children should or should not do when watching TV with others How about (name of child)? What rules do you have for him/her regarding TV viewing?" The number of responses to this open-ended question were tabulated in order to construct this variable.

** The five questionnaire items designed to tap the concept orientation of family communication patterns were summed for purposes of this variable.

*** The five questionnaire items designed to tap the Social Orientation of Family communication patterns were summed for purposes of this variable.

The summary date for the three regression analyses are presented in Table 2. Only those items which accounted for a substantial amount of

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Insert Table 2 about here

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variance are included, although nearly all variables were stepped into the results at a statistically signficant level. For restrictiveness measure, total number of television rules operating in the family accounted for the most

variance, although it was a very low 6 percent. Overall only 13 percent of the variance of Non-Restrictive rules were accounted for by the four items which entered the model.

The Content Discussion measure was explained by three variables, including concept orientation, number of family viewing rules and age of the child. Only 16 percent of the variance was explained by these three variables.

The Social Control measure had five significant predictors: education of parent, social orientation, concept orientation, marital status and average weekday television viewing of the child. These variables accounted again for only a small portion of the total variance, 13 percent.

Analysis of Variance

The third major concern of the study was the relationship between family television rules and family communication patterns. The multiple regression analysis demonstrated that for each rule, several variables were operating on these family television rules. In order to test to see what differences between these rules and family communication patterns existed, it was necessary to parcel out the variance associated with the variables which had been found to be significantly linked to the television rules during the regression analyses. An analysis of covariance procedure was followed for Restrictiveness and Content Discussion measures and the results of these analyses are presented in Table 3. Because two of the three items which accounted for the most variance on the Social Control measure were non-metric, the Analysis of Covariance procedure could not be employed for the Social Control factor. As can be seen in Table 3, the covariantes for the Restrictiveness measure were all significant. There

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Insert Table 3 about here

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were no significant differences observed between the four family communication pattern families according to the perceived level of restrictiveness.

The four family communication pattern types did significantly vary according to Content Discussion rules, however. The means and significant differences between these four family types are presented in Table 4.

Insert Table 4 about here

Pluralistic (8.38) and consensual (8.06) families both perceived these Content Discussion rules to be more operative in their homes than do the laissez-faire (7.27) families. The pluralistic families (8.38) use Content Discussion rules more than protective families (7.47), as well. The varying family communication pattern families also significantly varied on the Social Control rules. Here, both protective (3.98) and consensual (3.87) families used these rules less than pluralistic families (3.51).

A final series of univariate analyses was performed to identify the differences in the variables which appeared to be accounting for the multivariate variation in the Television rules variables. Each of the variables used as covariates was categorized into levels. Number of children was categorized to include three levels: one child, two children and three or more children. Number of television rules was categorized into four levels: no rules, one rule, two rules, three or more rules. Age of child was categorized into four levels: 4 to 6 years old; 7 to 9 years old; 10 to 12 years old and 13 to 15 years old.[4] Separate one-way analysis of variances were performed on these three variables as the dependent variables utilizing the three family television rules variables as the dependent measure. The

summary tables for the results of these analyses are presented in Table 5.

Insert Table 5 about here

The means and post hoc cell conparisons are presented in Table 4. Consistent with the previous analyses, number of rules, number of children in the family and age of child all accounted for significant differences in level of restrictiveness. Not surprising, those families with no TV rules identified in the open-ended section of the questionnaire, scored significantly lower on their level of restrictiveness than did respondents who mentioned either one, two or three rules.

Table 4 also shows that as number of children in the household increase, the level of restrictiveness increases.

A linear relationship between age of child and level of restrictiveness was also observed. As Table 4 shows, 13 to 15 year old children are significantly less apt to have restrictions on their viewing than are their younger counterparts in the family.

Number of TV rules and age of the child were found to significantly effect the Content Discussion rules. Table 4 shows that in households where three or more rules were mentioned, they were significantly more apt to respond than the other groups that they used television Content Discussion rules. There appears to be a linear relationship between the use of these Content Discussion rules and age, although the cell means are not significantly different.

Discussion

The three factor solutions reported in this analysis suggest several important theoretical issues relative to our understanding of television

viewing rules. First, the single item indicators used to measure viewing rules in past research (Steiner, 1963; Bower, 1973; Lyle and Hoffman, 1962) tend to mask the interrelatedness between rule categories. If we look at the Restrictiveness factor it becomes apparent that the distinction between time and content rules is less salient than the differential application of rules in the family setting. Second, the Content Discussion factor suggests that parents are not only concerned with restricting or permitting the consumption of certain types of content by their children but also are concerned with how their children interpret television content. Thus, content type rules are more multi-dimensional than past research has suggested.

Finally, the social control factor offers some validation for the contention that context rules are important factors in parental control of their children's viewing habits. The items that loaded highly on this factor neither relate directly to time rules nor content rules but instead relate to the context of viewing. Further, these items seem to relate to parental attempts to regulate children's behavior apart from television viewing through the use of television as a reward, a punishment and the like. This finding is consistent with the finding reported in uses and gratifications research. Clearly, social control rules suggest that, at least in some instances, the use of television is not exclusively content related, but also functions as a form of regulation of behavior.

These results, then, seem to suggest a restructuring of the way we conceptualize viewing rules. There are several points that are worthy of consideration here. First, much of the viewing rules research has treated this issue in a somewhat atheoretical fashion. We have looked at very specific regulative behaviors such as specific restrictions, or lack of same,

on the amount of violent programming a child may consume or the total amount of time a child may spend in front of the television on a daily basis without considering the large body of research into the nature of rules. As merely one example of a theoretical approach, we might consider the position taken by many rules theorists that rules are both regulative and constitutive (Rosenfield, Schultz-Hayes, and Frantz, 1976; Cushman, 1977). Research to date has concentrated almost wholey on the regulative aspects of viewing rules without clearly addressing the admittedly more complex and subtle aspect of how viewing rules influence the constitution of the viewing experience for the child.

We need also to consider more directly what we consider to be an appropriate operational definition of television viewing rules. There are clearly both conceptual and measurement issues involved here. If we choose to define rules as codified procedures (using the term very loosely), that is, openly expressed and relatively consistently applied standards for viewing behavior, we are less likely to find rules functioning in the family. If, on the other hand, we use a less rigorous definition which includes normative behaviors within the family which may function regulatively as well as constituently, we may be able to more effectively address the dominant issues that underly research into viewing rules: what are the mediating factors that influence a child's relationship with the television and what factors constitute the viewing experience of a child.

Clearly, this more liberal definition of rules poses a host of measurement problems. First, what parameters are to be set for an operational definition of rules? We have as yet not satisfactorily answered this question. The relatively low reliability reported for our rule indices as well as the

relatively low explained variance bare witness to that fact. A more well developed conceptual framework in future research should lead to increasingly reliable measures and an increase in explained variance. Second, we must consider the possibility of differential interpretation of the parameter's of rules among respondents. As noted above the concept of rules may be defined on a continuum from a very restrictive to a very liberal definition. This ambiguity may well affect the results we find. Here again, a stronger conceptualization of what rules are, or, more precisely, what regulative behavior consists of, may reduce the potential ambugity in questionnaire items.

The multiple regression analysis provided a series of variables that were significant in predicting rule types, though each rule type generated a different set of relationships. The age of the child was a significant predictor for both Restrictiveness and Content Discussion measures. The analysis of variance for level of Restrictiveness indicated that there was a significant difference between age levels of the children. There was a clear tendency for parents to be less restrictive for older children that for younger children. This is quite consistent with the findings reported by Lyle and Hoffman (1972) and Bower (1973). While post hoc analyses showed no significant differences between age levels, there was a clear trend indicating that younger children received more content discussion than older children. This finding deviates from the curvalinear pattern reported by Bower (1973). He found most content concern with parents of children between 7 and 9 years of age with lower concern for younger and older children. Comstock, et al. (1978) argued that there was an increase in concern for the socialization effect for children of this age. Our findings suggest that this concern peaks at an earlier age and decreases linearly. It should be noted, though, that the

Content Discussion measure is conceptually different from Bower's more narrow content rule measure.

The educational level of the parent was only a significant predictor of social control rules. The contradicts Bower's (1973) finding that education was related to both time and content rules. There are several possible explanations for this finding. First, Bower used single item indicators; the error associated with such potentially low reliable measures may explain the differences he reported. Second, this study used different constructs for rule types which may be less sensitive to educational level. Clearly, though, education of the parent is associated with the use of television as a social control mechanism.

Sex of child was not a significant predictor of any of the three rule types. This is inconsistent with past research findings (Lyle and Hoffman, 1973). The explanation for this finding may be the same as that suggested for education of parent.

The number of children in the family was a significant predictor for for only the level of restrictiveness in the family. There was a clear trend showing an increase in restrictiveness as the number of children in the family increased. This finding makes conceptional sense for, as the number of children increases, the parent's job of regulating the use of the television becomes more complex, thus necessitating more restrictions on the children's television use. Further, with more children in the family, age differences between the children becomes a complicating factor in control of time and content.

Family communication patterns were shown to relate to Content Discussion

and Social Control rules but not to level of restrictiveness. The concept orientation dimension was a relatively strong predictor of Content Discussion rules. This is certainly consistent with that construct. Parents with relatively high concept orientations tended to have more Content Discussion rules that parents with low concept orientations. Social Control rules demonstrated a slightly more complex pattern. Both the concept and socio-orientation dimensions were significant predictors of these rules. Pluralistic families (high concept-low social) were the least likely to have Social Control rules. This is consistent with what might be expected from these two groups. Protective families more concerned with social relationships and Social Control rules are tapping social relationship behaviors.

There appears to be no relationship between family communication patterns and level of restrictiveness. The explanation for this nonsignificant finding was not clear. It appears, though, that how restrictive a parent is relative to time and content is unrelated either to an orientation to concept or an orientation to social relations; neither dimension was a significant predictor of these rules.

Two further variables are worthy of note. Both number of family viewing rules and average weekday television viewing by the child were significant predictors of level of restrictiveness. The greater the number of viewing rules a parent has the more restrictive a parent is in regulating a child's viewing behavior. Conversely, the more television a child watches on an average weekday the less restrictive the parent is. Similarly, the more rules a parent has for television viewing the more likely that parent is to have Content Discussion rules. This suggests some validation for the Restrictiveness and Content Guidance constructs. One would expect that the

more rules a parent has for television viewing the more likely that parent would have more restrictions of children's viewing and would be more concerned with the children's understanding of content. Further, since number of rules relates to both restrictiveness and content discussion, this variable may be tapping parental concern for their children's use of television. This, though, needs to be empirically tested in future research.

The results presented here demonstrate the complex and multivariate nature of defining television viewing rules. Clearly, viewing rules function on a number of dimensions. By conceptualizing television rules not as independent and highly specific constructs, but instead, as more generalized orientations such as level of restrictiveness, Content Discussion and Social Control we are better able to understand the sociological implications of rules in the family setting. The analyses presented here have demonstrated that family communication patterns are related to some of these constructs. Future research in family viewing rules needs avoid dealing with such rules in relative isolation from other family orientations and behaviors. If we assume that there is an interrelated structure to family life we must begin to tie together such factors as rules, norms, family communication patterns and the like into a more meaningful whole. It is this more global, and clearly more ambitious, perspective that will allow for a better assessment of the social impact of television in the family.

NOTES

1. The authors would like to thank Lee Becker for providing the items used to construct the Family Communication Pattern measures and Virginia Fry and Allison Alexander for their helpful comments and criticisms of earlier drafts of this paper.

2. The two types of questions used to tap viewing rules were ordered in the questionnaire to first, allow the respondent to offer rules in an open-ended format without prompting, and, second, to allow the respondent to respond to Likert type items representing rules other parents used in regulating their children's viewing.

3. The family communication pattern variable was constructed by summing the raw scores for the socioitems and for the concept items. A median split was made on each index and each was recoded as high or low. The composit FCP index included subjects with low socio and low concept scores, low socio and high concept scores, high socio and low concept scores, and high socio and high concept scores.

4. While data was gathered on children of 2 and 3 years of age, interviewer debriefings indicated that parents of these children consistently indicated that the questionnaire had little relevance for such children. Thus, responses for children within this range were dropped from all analyses.

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TABLE 1

ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX FOR PARENTAL TELEVISION VIEWING RULES

N = 311	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III
Restrictiveness			
1. We have a very strict policy about how much TV ____ watches.	-.65*	.28	-.01
2. ____ is not permitted to watch violent TV shows.	-.62*	.22	-.05
3. ____ watches as much television as he/she wants to on school days.	.59*	-.05	-.03
4. The rules about how much TV _____ watches are very flexible, depending upon the situation.	.55*	.11	.12
5. ____ is never allowed to watch programs that advise parental discretion.	-.49*	.14	.01
6. Where shows have too much sex in them, we don't allow ____ to watch.	-.45	-.07	-.04
7. On Saturday mornings, ____ watches as much TV as he/she wants to.	.29	-.03	.09
8. When a baby sitter is in the house, ____ can usually watch TV later than if I was at home.	.25	.10	.17
9. I allow ___ to watch TV when he/she is playing a game.	.24	-.01	.04
Content Discussion			
10. We make it a rule to explain to _____ what TV commercials mean.	-.07	.71*	-.11
11. I try to be sure _____ watches some educational programs every week.	-.13	.52*	.15
12. We encourage _____ to talk about products he/she sees advertised on TV.	-.10	.48*	.03
13. I make a point of talking about TV with ____ nearly every day.	.16	.42	.27
Social Control			
14. When I want to reward _____ for doing something good, I often let him/her watch extra television.	.29	-.02	.53*
15. I encourage ____ to watch television when he/she comes home from school.	.25	.05	.51*
16. When _____ is bad, I often take his/her TV privileges away as punishment.	-.03	.01	.48*
17. When my friends are over, I encourage _____ to watch TV.	.13	.21	.42
18. I have to monitor how much TV _____ watches or he/she would do little else.	-.09	-.01	.39
19. When I'm watching my favorite show, _____ knows not to interrupt me.	.26	.05	.30
20. When bedtime comes and a special program is on, I let ____ watch it.	.15	.16	.20
21. I discourage _____ from watching cartoons.	-.10	.13	.16
Eigenvalue	3.41	2.44	1.5
Percent of total variance	16.3	11.6	7.3

*Denotes items retained for subsequent analysis.

TABLE 2

Summary Date of Stepwise Multiple Regressions for

Restrictiveness, Content Discussion, and Social Control

Measures with Demographic and Media Related Predictor Variables

Predictors	R Square	Beta	Entry F
Restrictiveness *			
Number of family viewing rules	.06	.23	27.03
Age of Child	.10	-.16	21.89
Average weekday viewing by child	.12	-.15	18.85
Number of children	.13	.10	15.61
CONTENT DISCUSSION MEASURE			
Concept orientation	.07	.26	33.33
Number of family viewing rules	.13	.22	30.98
Age of child	.16	-.16	26.45
SOCIAL CONTROL MEASURE			
Education of parent	.04	-.15	19.94
Social orientation	.08	.18	16.38
Concept orientation	.09	-.13	14.67
Marital status	.11	.15	13.98
Average weekday viewing by child	.13	.10	13.01

* The restrictiveness and content discussion measures consist of 3 questionnaire items; the social control measure consists of 2 questionnaire items.

TABLE 3

Summary Table of Analysis of Covariance and Analysis of Variance for Family Television Rules by Family Communication Patterns

Source of Variation	DF	Mean Sq.	F	Significance
Restrictiveness				
Covariates	4	94.15	16.58	.0001
number of rules	1	109.15	19.22	.0001
age of child	1	127.31	22.42	.0001
weekday TV viewing	1	59.22	10.43	.001
number of children	1	41.93	7.38	.007
Family Comm. Patterns	3	2.98	.52	.67
Residual	387	5.68		
CONTENT DISCUSSION				
Covariates	2	53.87	24.54	.0001
number of rules	1	74.78	32.06	.0001
age of child	1	27.33	12.45	.0001
Family Comm. Patterns	3	23.18	10.56	.0001
Residual	384	2.20		
SOCIAL CONTROL				
Family Comm. Patterns	3	4.18	4.60	.004
Residual	402	.91		

TABLE 4

Means and Standard Deviations of Family Television Rules by Family Communication Patterns, Age of Child, Number of TV Rules and Number of Children

Groups/Variables	(N)	Mean	S.D.	Significant Differences*
Restrictiveness				
Number of TV Rules				
none	99	11.90	2.66	a,b,c
one	131	12.73	2.36	a
two	109	12.98	2.37	b
three or more	111	13.72	2.54	c
Number of Children				
one	108	12.28	2.61	a
two	240	12.85	2.49	
three or more	102	13.47	2.48	a
Age of Child				
4 to 6	117	13.19	2.37	a
7 to 9	125	13.43	2.61	b
10 to 12	114	12.60	2.26	
13 to 15	94	11.97	2.73	a,b
CONTENT DISCUSSION				
Family Comm. Patterns				
laissez faire	66	7.27	1.53	a,b
pluralistic	105	8.38	1.61	a,c
protective	83	7.47	1.48	c
consensual	136	8.06	1.61	b
Number of TV Rules				
none	95	7.37	1.50	a
one	130	7.63	1.47	b
two	106	7.71	1.40	c
three or more	112	8.46	1.82	a,b,c
Age of Child				
4 to 6	117	8.03	1.48	
7 to 9	119	7.93	1.69	
10 to 12	113	7.75	1.66	
13 to 15	94	7.43	1.53	
SOCIAL CONTROL				
Family Comm. Patterns				
laissez faire	71	3.85	.79	
pluralistic	111	3.51	1.00	a,b
protective	83	3.98	.96	a
consensual	141	3.87	.98	b

*Groups with similar alphabetic notation are significantly different from each other using Scheffe's multiple range test, $p < .05$.

TABLE 5

Summary Statistics for Analysis of Variance of
Non-Restrictive and Content Guidance Dependent Measures by
Age of Child, Number of TV Rules and Number of Children

Source of Variation	DF	Mean Sq.	F	Significance
Restrictiveness				
Number of Children	2	37.33	5.89	.003
Error	447	6.34		
Number of TV Rules	3	59.21	9.67	.0001
Error	446	6.12		
Age of Child	3	45.38	7.30	.0001
Error	446	6.22		
CONTENT DISCUSSION				
Number of TV rules	3	23.91	9.88	.0001
Error	439	2.42		
Age of Child	3	7.16	2.83	.04
Error	439	2.53		